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APPROACHES TO PROMOTING PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS - A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA

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V.B. Dunmade
Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

LC/NAIROB

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INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is located on the west coast of Africa. It is surrounded by the Niger and Chad in the north, Cameroon in the east, Benin in the west and by the Atlantic ocean in the south. The country is divided into 21 states for administrative purposes and has three major tribes with their languages and is largely a multi-ethnic country. There are three main types of vegetation which are rain forest, savannah grassland and semi-desert scrub. The rain forest is found mainly in the southern part of the country which include the following states: Akwa-Ibom, Anambra, Bendel, Cross River, Imo, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo and Rivers; the savannah grassland covers the middle belt areas of Benue, Kwara Benue, Plateau, Niger and Gongola, while the northern parts - Sokoto, Katzina, Kano and parts of Gongola and Borno states - are in the Sahel area (semi-arid).

The climate is generally tropical with two main seasons: the rainy season and the dry season. The rainy season starts in April and lasts until August and the dry season starts from September to March. Although in the coastal areas, rains begin earlier than April and continue into October and beyond.

Talking about crops and mineral, Nigeria is a predominantly agrarian society and is blessed with many agricultural products, the major ones being cocoa, oilpalm, palm kernel, groundnut, cotton, benniseed, beans, bananas, yams, rice, cassava, rubber and palm oil. Most of these crops are consumed locally either as food, feed or used as industrial raw materials while a few of them like cotton, cocoa, rubber and groundnut are exported.

The main minerals include tin, coal, and oil.

Although the English language is the official medium of expression, the country has about 250 ethnic groups, the two most being Hausa/Fulani, Ibo and Yoruba. Each of these tribes has a long history of cultural and economic traditions which are very diverse and fascinating.

political history

Politically Nigeria operated on ethnic groupings which were organized and governed on the basis of the principles of kingship, laity, and age. But later, these developed in many different directions. Some remained communal democracies while others became kingdoms, emirates and empires. Though these various communities operated different forms of government they constantly traded, exchanged visits and inter-married among themselves.

Britain formally colonized Lagos in 1861 and it was later able to extend and strengthen its earlier contacts with the coastal communities of the south into a vast colonial territory which is now called Nigeria. This ruling lasted for 100 years.

By 1914 the separate administrations which the British had set up over the southern and northern sections of Nigeria were united. Hence a single political authority came into existence to exercise political power in the country.

During these years and the post independence era, the people were made to depend more on foreign goods by encouragement of importation of goods to local manufacturing and which is partly responsible for the dependence syndrome.

This process of economic dependence still continues in the country today, this is because the system developed by the colonialists which ensured the continuation of this economic dependence still remains. Such institutions or systems include the educational system, the judicial system, the civil service, the police, the military and other institutions.

Although Nigeria is no longer under British rule, there is still a dominant capitalist culture and influence in the country. This is why we have with us today a class distinction between the working class people and the wealthy ones, and the political instability which the country has been experiencing.

Policy goals since after independence

Nigeria's policy goals which aim at improving the social well-being of its people started with its second National Development Plan (1970-1974). The declared objective was an egalitarian society where every citizen has equal opportunities in the country. This has been clearly stated by the Nigerian Government as follows:

"A just and egalitarian society puts a premium on reducing inequalities in inter-personal incomes and ensuring balanced development among the various communities in the different geographical areas in the country. It organizes its economic institutions in such a way that there is no oppression based on class, social status, ethnic group or place. Distributive equity is therefore an important cornerstone in the set of national objectives for the government programme of reconstruction and reform. The ultimate goal of economic development is the welfare of the individual. The focus of our policy objectives should therefore, be on how the ordinary citizen is to be affected by the resulting set of action programmes and projects. The prospect of the citizen in the process of economic development and social change should not be determined by the mere accident of the circumstances of his birth. He should be able to have equal access to all the facilities and the opportunities which could help him realize his potential and develop his opportunity fully. A sense of self reliance and a sense of national pride are worthy objectives which the government believes the average Nigerian wishes to cultivate. But he can only do so in an atmosphere of expanding opportunities, for all employment, for education, and self-fulfillment. The nation will, therefore, remain fully committed to the achievement of these objectives at all times". (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1970).

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the Government means well and shows the concern it has for the people. The Government tried to improve the lot of the people but the events of 1970 and the 1980s do not really show that any greater attempts have been made than ever before in the development of the nation. The outcome of this period was a general growth in GNP from about 210 (i.e. Naira 230) per inhabitant in 1975 to about 420 (Naira 508) by 1979 (Cole 1981, World Bank, 1983).

However, in the "Guidelines for the fourth National Development Plan 1981-1985", the Nigerian Government admitted that it has failed in the implementation of its earlier-stated egalitarian objectives. Consequently, while reaffirming its commitment once again to the same goal, it boldly itemized some concrete areas of concern, thus:

"In the past there was a tendency to measure economic performance in terms of such aggregates as the gross domestic product (GDP), capital formation, and in terms of financial expenditures incurred in the implementation of plan projects. Though it may be easy and convenient to do so, it is clear that such indices do not tell the whole story. The common man is more interested in such things as the availability of drinking water, housing units, medical facilities, educational facilities, good roads, life expectancy, calories intake, etc. From this point of view, it may be significant to know how far these facilities have improved during the plan period as such information provides a good criterion for measuring development". (Federal Ministry of National Planning, 1981).

The outcome of this plan did not meet the desired needs of the populace. The structure of Nigeria's economy has been described as "a sorry economy which suffers from fundamental structural contradiction. It is an economy endowed with spectacular mineral wealth, but could not provide enough agricultural products for its domestic consumption and industrial needs. It is an economy which strives desperately hard to provide basic infrastructure only to create more urgent demands in other sectors. Finally, it is an economy with an official inflation rate of over 15 per cent which somehow fails to encourage massive private investment." (Federal Ministry of Industries, 1982).

Policy implementation method

To achieve the set objectives, the country concentrated on promoting the economy through importing highly advanced Euro-American, modern technologies and use of their models, which has failed to yield the intended effects. The country has witnessed high unemployment, migration of the rural people to the urban areas, high poverty rate among 80 per cent of the total populace and development of high taste for imported goods. The nation's economy changed from dependence on agriculture to that of mining, commerce and construction. Facilities provided in the cities are often over-stretched because of the rapid growth of the cities. This has shifted the country from the productive sector to the services sector.

It may be pertinent to ask this question: What are the factors responsible for the non-achievement of the objectives in the development plans of Nigeria? Why, despite all the amount of road construction, building of schools, industries, provision of electricity and some other infrastructures, the majority of the people have not been touched by this apparent affluence and social changes accompanying the gigantic development and growth programmes of the nation since the past three or more decades of development planning?

In preferring answers to this question, Arua (1985) observed that the concept *of the nation is not very clear* to a great majority of the population. To these people, it is a matter of myself, my people or tribe and my community. In this context, then, development efforts at the rural level and the attendant technological changes should be people-oriented.

From the political economic structure of Nigeria, it can be seen clearly that development planning had been adopted as a way of its economic development.

It was pointed out that all the efforts made at the modernization of the rural communities have failed to yield the desired results because most of the efforts had been based on transferring highly advanced Euro-American modern technologies and development models to Nigeria. By so doing it was thought that the local villages would quickly develop which resulted in the development differential between the village and the city. As of today, it has so far brought disastrous consequences. The gap has increased instead of narrowing. The populace have been paupetized, their living conditions have fallen below acceptable standards leading to virtual abandonment or neglect of agriculture, the only occupation the people know best. In short, the so-called modernization theory advanced by both our Euro-American and indigenous experts has failed to do the magic claimed for it. Again, another question could be posed.

What could be the cause of these failures in our country when these have had stories of successes in their native countries of Europe and America? The reasons are not farfetched. Arua (1985) submitted that the failure has been mainly due to the fact that these strategies were alien to the people's traditional and cultural values. He observed that the organizational structures and administrative set up in implementing the strategies resulted in failure and the recipient populace were worse off for it. He further explained that in implementing these strategies and models of development based on the modernization theory, the experts ignored the fact that these strategies and models originated under very different circumstances and for the benefit of very different kinds of circumstances which are (Hyden, 1976) quite distinct from those of the recipient countries. Another major reason advanced is that the people who were supposedly being helped to develop were not involved and the help was just thrust on them by experts from 'above' or from external donor rural development agencies. No attempts were made to understand the people and their ways of functioning. It reaffirmed the fact that viable solutions to many rural development problems can only come from the people themselves (COPAR, 1978). In other words, in embarking on any rural development projects, the local people should be involved from the onset. They should be involved in articulating existing patterns of self-help, in voicing organizational and developmental problems, in working out solutions to such problems, and in implementing the new participatively designed solutions or measures of aid (Seibel and Damachi, 1982). This process of participatory rural development will mean development from below and from within the people with the external agencies giving a helping hand.

Recent Nigerian Government policy has now viewed rural development not only as a social technical but also as an economic process. This is because rural economic development is focused on human welfare - on family well being, nutrition, public health, community involvement information geared towards improving the quality of life generally.

The goals of rural development from this human perspective are summarized as:

(a) The satisfaction of elementary basic needs of food, shelter, clothing and health;

(b) Improving life style and quality of life of the 60 per cent rural population through quantitative and qualitative changes;

(c) Establishment of social justice through a humanely acceptable distribution of goods and services;

(d) Freeing the individual from the uncertainties of nature through education essential for self-actualization;

(e) Breaking through the marginality of rural masses through full active participation in all the activities and at all levels of command research, planning and implementation (FAO, 1973). These goals of rural development stress the need for total and effective mobilization as in the pre-capitalist mode of production of all available human (male and female) and natural resources to ensure that the task is effectively carried out.

The focus in rural development on developing techniques and economic infrastructures - access roads, credit and such inputs as tractors, plough, fertilizers, improved seeds, insecticides designed to increase per capita output, and market orientation among the rural population - lead to a different set of goals of rural development. These can be summarized as:

(a) Increase in per capita output and market orientation among the rural population;

(b) Increased food production commensurate with the rapid population growth;

(c) Ensuring equitable redistribution of aggregate income;

(d) Reduction in regional inequalities in per capita income;

(e) Reduction of the rate of rural-urban migration;

(f) Gaining a precise and scientific understanding of the social and ecological environment in which rural changes is to occur.

Avoola and Idachaba (1989) observed that the discernible trend in development economics is the gradual movement away from growth and other non-poverty oriented performance criteria towards the people, particularly rural people, as the focal point of any development strategy. The universal approach is to launch a massive attack on rural poverty, which will also benefit the urban economy in the long run. Basically, rural infrastructural build-up is construed as the primary requirement of the rural people to manifest their full economic potential. Hence the rural infrastructure strategy is only a subset of the

overall rural development strategy, which in turn is an integral part of the general economic development strategy of a country.

The general notion underlying the rural infrastructure strategy is that it is difficult for the rural sector to contribute significantly to economic progress in the absence of basic facilities that also enhance their living standards.

The observed emphasis on agriculture is based on the universal fact that life in rural regions is based mostly on agriculture, which explains the initial concentration of efforts on those infrastructures which facilitate agricultural processes directly albeit not exclusively. The presence of substantial externalities, chain effects, spill-over effects and linkage effects among rural activities ensure that the general focus on agriculture will also benefit other aspects of rural life in due course. Ayoola and Idachaba (1989) noted that these infrastructure items are essentially a public obligation owing to five reasons. First, the lumpiness of expenditure required is generally beyond the reach of ordinary individuals; second, there is the presence of free rider problem which discourages private individuals; third, infrastructural facilities are durable stocks of capital which require regular maintenance costs and hence life long inter-generational consequences; finally, the provision of infrastructures cuts across different ministries and disciplines which are under the control of government.

Integrated rural development was conceptualized and a deliberate programme in this regard was mounted in the form of farm settlement scheme. The rural infrastructural components of the scheme include physical (rural roads, rural housing, markets, etc), social (primary school, health care, etc.), and institutional (farmers co-operatives, co-operative tailoring societies, etc.) Farm settlements exist to date in many states of the federation, but merely now consist of ill maintained and inaccessible buildings and other structures with few or no settlers. In practical terms they have petered out from human memories as a component of the integrated rural development policy (Ayoola and Idachaba, 1989).

Another stage in rural infrastructure programming consists of the collaborative efforts of federal and state governments to establish, in series, a number of integrated agricultural development projects (ADPs) under the funding assistance of the World Bank.

Local participation

It was observed that the satisfaction of rural infrastructure requirements does not rest on supply management only; it also depends on effective demand management. The latter presumes that generation and articulation of demand for public services through local participation is quite important (Ayoola and Idachaba, 1989). For rural infrastructures, the particular aspect of local involvement that is of immense importance is maintenance. Strong co-operation of the local organizations have an important role to play in the area of maintenance management. Some experiences under the ADPs show that representative local bodies can minimize waste and handle maintenance work. They can also minimize the amount of benefit of rural infrastructure services accruing to the

privileged group. Some of the questions are: How can the commitment of local people be mobilized and local participation be secured and strengthened? In what ways can local community-based programmes be incorporated into the rural infrastructure strategy?

Awoola and Idachaba (1989) made the following specific recommendations to provide guidelines for effective rural infrastructure strategy:

(a) The sponsors of rural infrastructure projects must maintain a close link between planned and actual fund allocations and other aspects that determine their enduring commitment over the entire project's life;

(b) There should be built-in stabilizers in the rural infrastructure strategy to limit the adverse effects of perturbations arising from frequent organizational and personnel changes on the implementation performance of projects;

(c) The rural infrastructure strategy requires provisions for contemporaneous operational research and planning studies to perfect the various technical processes involved in the implementation of projects; some of the processes that are presently inefficiently carried out are infrastructure budgeting, costing, screening and evaluation, as well as tendering, direct labour utilization, cost control, monitoring and supervision;

(d) Appropriate responsibility sharing formula must be found to allocate resources among the different tiers of government in the infrastructure development process;

(e) Efforts should be intensified to involve the local people in the infrastructure development process, including provision of assistance to the target groups towards instilling confidence in them to utilize the autonomous forces within the individual and the group for ensuring their co-operation in the execution and maintenance of the facilities.

Present government policy

As stated earlier, the major factor which influences the rural development process is the government policy. This is because it is the government that determines the amount of public funds to be allocated to the rural sector, the way and manner in which rural resources will be harnessed and utilized and the groups in society which are likely to benefit from development process.

Other factors as stated by many scholars are the failure to take cognizance of the socio-cultural and traditional value of the populace, and lastly the organizational structures and administrative set up in implementing the strategies. The failure to involve the people who are to be helped in the planning process or to try to understand the ways these people function are also crucial. It is clear to the Government that the only way to recovery and development of the nation is to adopt the participatory process; that is, development from below and from within the people with both the Government and external agencies giving a guiding hand.

In taking cognizance of these facts, recent government policy has focus on promoting people's participation in recovery and development. What do we mean by this development?

Development has been seen as the process by which man increases or maximizes his control and use of the material resources with which nature has endowed him and his environment (Afigbo, 1988). In general, therefore, development is seen as consisting of five main ingredients:

(i) Increasing material wealth for the use of individuals and the whole nation (income and economic development);

(ii) Eliminating unemployment;

(iii) Eliminating poverty and want;

(iv) Eliminating inequality;

(v) Increasing the general availability of labour-saving devices, hence the modern emphasis on technology and technological growth (Afigbo, 1988).

Development, therefore, is not only the manipulation of the physical universe and the laws that control it but also the manipulation of the mind of man through formal and informal education. Development also means a movement that involves everybody and everything in a society.

To promote people's participation in the recovery and development of the nation, the Nigerian Government has embarked on a number of projects in the past three years which actually encourage people's participation. Some of these programmes are as follows:

Government policy and agricultural economy

Government involvement in agriculture is an effective way of promoting people's participation in the recovery and development of the nation. Since agriculture has been widely recognized as the major source of Nigeria's economic survival, it has played and continued to play an important role in the economy of the country until the era of oil boom in 1970 during which farm labour was deserted for the brighter prospects in the expanded construction, commercial and services sector of the economy which, however, did not last. Not only does agriculture form the major core of our economy, it also touches the lives of many Nigerians in the rural areas. This is because more than 70-80 per cent of the Nigerian populace resides in rural areas and farms the land. Unfortunately, this situation eventually phased out and the country had gone through a lot of changes in its economic status.

Within the periods of 1970-1985, agriculture fell from the leading sector in the economy to a neglected one as is evidenced by the following facts:

1. The sector's contributory share of the GDP (at 1977/1978 constant factor cost) declined from about 58 per cent in 1965 to 48 per cent in 1970; 18 per cent in 1980 and about 9 per cent in 1985 as shown in Table 1.

2. Between 1970 and 1985, food production in Nigeria grew at an average annual rate of about 2 per cent while the demand grew at an average annual rate of about 3.5 per cent, hence resulting in increasing food supply deficit. The result of this is a high rate of increase in food imports, which on the average, was about 26 per cent per annum between 1971 and 1980 as against an average decline of about 3.25 per cent per annum between 1960 and 1970. Food imports increased from Naira 88.3 million in 1971 to a high of Naira 1.82 billion in 1981. It has subsequently declined to Naira 966.1 million in 1985 (see table 2). Secondly, there is a high rate of growth in food prices.

3. The total share of agricultural commodities in the total value of all exports from Nigeria declined from an average of about 74 per cent in the 1960-1965 period to about 4 per cent in the 1976-1980 period and about 2 per cent in 1985 (see table 3).

4. The country's dependence on raw materials imports increased as a result of low production.

5. Problems of unemployment increased in this sector as it cannot absorb all manpower trained by the policy programmes.

The changes in the agricultural economy of the nation are due to some problems facing the sector. Some of these problems are both natural and man-made. Some result from the natural phenomenon while some are due to government policies and programmes. Some of these problems include:

(i) A precipitous decline in agricultural productivity since the oil boom era of the 1970s during which virile farm labour deserted the farms for brighter prospects in the expanded construction, commercial and services sectors of the economy;

(ii) An excessive emphasis by policy makers on a mere increase of the land area under cultivation rather than on an increase in farm productivity;

(iii) An insufficiency of other non-labour farm inputs such as improved seeds and livestock, fertilizers, etc;

(iv) A lack of supporting physical infrastructure such as feeder roads, storage and marketing facilities and adequate water supply for the areas of production.

To arrest the decline in agricultural productivity, inadequate food supplies, loss of livestock and other related problems, various programmes have been implemented to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of agricultural research and agricultural production. These two requirements have been addressed by both the science and technology policy (launched in 1987) and the agricultural policy for Nigeria (launched in 1988).

New policy and programme initiatives (1985 to date)

The role of government (in agricultural development), the state of the economy and the political environment or atmosphere which dictates the continuity or stability of policies and programmes are very important factors in agricultural development.

In addition, a clear sense of direction and well-articulated policy objectives upon which government projects and programmes of actions are based is very essential. For this reason, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Water, Resources and Rural Development recently prepared a document entitled "Agricultural policy for Nigeria".

The approach enables the people concerned to actually participate in the plan. It involved farmers and other private sector operators engaged in agricultural production and related activities. It also gives room to flexibility to accommodate changing situations and circumstances as against rigidity.

The Government is also determined to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the programmes, and projects arising from the policy measures will be vigorously pursued on a continuous basis in order to correct deviations from laid down guidelines as soon as they are discovered.

Some of the major decisions taken to boost the agricultural sector include:

(i) Provision of inputs and machine spare parts and other forms of assistance to small-scale farmers in particular and the generality of the farmers through the reduction of import duty on agricultural equipment to the minimum level;

(ii) Liberalization of the loan scheme for small-scale farmers through which they can obtain loans of up to Naira 5,000 without collateral.

(iii) The establishment of the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure specifically mandated to put additional resources into the promotion and development of rural infrastructure, particularly roads and rural water supplies.

With these new government policies, there is hope that agricultural sector of the economy will:

(i) Provide adequate food for our increasing population;

(ii) Supply adequate raw materials for a growing industrial sector;

(iii) Constitute a major source of employment;

(iv) Serve as a major source of foreign exchange earnings; and

(v) Offer a market for the products of the industrial sector.

In this way, the impact will be felt both at the national and grass-roots level.

The Directorate for Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure

Yet another government programme in promoting people's participation is the creation of the Directorate for Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) by the Federal Government in 1986. The major objective of the programme is to open up the rural areas by feeder roads. This, it is hoped, will subsequently help to open the rural areas up for the social and health services such as good clean water, education, light and decent accommodation, increased and improved agricultural inputs and easy evacuation of farm produce for increased income. The expectation of these services is to discourage the present rural-urban drift.

DFRRI roads are being constructed nationwide to link villages and farm lands to wider markets. For the riverine areas, government is dredging the access creeks to enable large boats and barges to move people, supplies and heavy equipment for use in the provision of social amenities. The Government is also providing motorized boats to convey people to schools, health centres and to the urban centres for the marketing of rural products and the purchase of supplies needed in the rural communities.

With this programme, the Nigerian Government encourages the participation of rural dwellers in the development of different sectors of the economy.

Introduction of People's Bank

The People's Bank Programme - was established on 1 October 1989 to serve the urban and rural poor only. It is an attempt by the Government to ease the hardship faced by traders and artisans engaged in small enterprises who may not have the necessary requirement to obtain credit facilities in conventional commercial houses.

Under this scheme, artisans and petty traders - bricklayers, vulcanizers, foodstuff dealers, carpenters, etc. - would benefit from unsecured loans of between Naira 50 and Naira 2,000 with only 5 per cent interest. The only major requirement is for the would-be beneficiary to register with an association recognized by the Bank. Since its inception, it has given out Naira 500,000 as loans to 580 persons and has so far opened nine branches and thirty-six centres in seven states of the Federation. Hopefully, more branches of the Bank would be opened in other parts of the country.

The National Directorate of Employment

The Government of Nigeria, in the attempt to promote people's participation in recovery and development, introduced the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) scheme to serve as a catalyst in creation of employment opportunities. The programme areas of focus are on:

(a) The reactivation of public works;

(b) Promotion of direct labour;

(c) Promotion of self-employment;

(d) Organization of artisans into co-operatives and the encouragement of a culture of maintenance and repairs.

By this programme, the Government has been able to provide apprenticeships for crafts and skills based on traditional crafts using local improved products. Provisions are made available to learn activities like catering, fashion design, carpentry, etc., which have led to the operation of small-scale industries in the country. These small-scale industries are growing rapidly and many products such as keyholders, flower vases, flowers, earrings, caps, bottle openers, clothing and various snacks are available in the markets.

Another key programme of the NDE is the graduate farmer programme. In this programme a total of 6,555 unemployed graduates have been given agricultural loans to go into commercial farming. This has resulted in massive job creation.

Various jobs:

- Farm jobs for farm lands all-year-round;
- Seasonal jobs at an average rate of three farm hands per hectare;
- Good numbers of school leavers undergoing training in agro-techniques nationwide in resettlement centres;
- Lastly, another large number of school leavers have each been resettled in 2 hectares of farmland with loan packages. These employ an average of nine farm hands for year round operations.

Thus, the graduate farmer programme has not only increased agricultural production but has also provided additional opportunities in the agricultural sector of the Nigerian economy.

The National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERF)

The National Economic Reconstruction Fund is another programme established by the Government to mobilize financial resources that would enable small and medium eligible industrial and allied enterprises to have access to medium-/long-term (five to ten years) loan facilities. This will help them to acquire their fixed assets such as machinery and equipment. But for this new arrangement, the small- and medium scale indigenous manufacturing and agro-related projects may not likely get credit facilities to purchase equipment at attractive conditions. This is because where these enterprises are required to source their machinery and equipment from outside Nigeria, they have had problems obtaining the requisite foreign exchange even when they are willing to pay exorbitant prices or where they were able to mobilize the local currency equivalent of the desired foreign exchange.

Since small-scale (and also medium-scale) industrial enterprises provide the engine of growth for any economy and create more jobs per unit of investment

than large-scale ones, introduction of the scheme would not only go a long way in the recovery of economy but also make possible further investment and financial flow into the country. Such a financial flow mechanism would importantly complement government's other current assistance programmes to small- and medium scale enterprises. On the whole this scheme encourages competition and dynamism in the rise of small and medium-scale real production enterprises.

Contribution of women's organizations to the improvement of the socio-economic situation of women in Nigeria

Many organizations have made efforts to correct the imbalance resulting from the marginalization of women in the development process. Principal among them are a variety of women's organizations which include governmental, non-governmental, philanthropic, professional, voluntary and religious associations, as well as social clubs. Notable among these organizations/association are:

(i) Women in Development (WID);

(ii) The National Council of Women Societies (NCWS);

(iii) The Women in Nigeria (WIN);

(iv) Nigerian Association of Media Women, etc.;

(v) Joint Armed Forces and Police Officers' Wives associations, e.g., Nigerian Air Force Officers' Wives Association; Police Officers' Wives Association; Nigerian Army Officers' Wives Association, etc.;

(vi) Philantropic and Voluntary associations, e.g., Soroptomists, Zonta, Girl Guides Associations; and

(vii) Religious associations, e.g., Federation of Muslim Women's Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN) and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).

These associations/organizations have a common goal and similar objectives. They have adopted various imaginative ways of achieving these objectives aimed at different women groups as the target audience.

Women in Development (WID) is essentially a governmental outfit and operates through national, State and, in some cases, local government chapters, provides inter-disciplinary and multi-sectional machinery for the acceleration of the achievement of equal opportunity for women and their full integration into the development process.

The National Council of Women Societies (NCWS) has a membership of not less than one million women registered with 15 women's organizations all over the country and is strictly a non-governmental organization which promotes the welfare and progress (economic and social) of women, laying special emphasis on education and training

The Women in Nigeria (WIN), established in 1982 and with a membership some of 450 women and men, engages in research, policy making, dissemination of information and action aimed at improving the condition of women. Specifically, among others, it aims at combating disciplinary and sexist practices in the family and in the work place.

Programmes/projects/activities of women's organizations in Nigeria

Studies of the needs of women have shown that strategies designed to enhance female participation in development must address three broad areas, namely:

(a) Reproductive role and health care;

(b) Economic role, including education, skills training and technology development; and

(c) Entrepreneurship and co-operative development, including access to credit and technical assistance.

Therefore, most of the programmes/projects, etc., of the women's organizations are geared towards improving the situation in these areas and creating political awareness in them. These programmes take the form of:

(a) Educational projects;

(b) Agricultural projects;

(c) Health projects and environmental protection projects;

(d) Science and technology projects;

(e) Cottage industries;

(f) Banking and finance schemes; and

(g) Social welfare programmes.

Some of the above will briefly be discussed.

Educational projects/programmes

The educational programmes, etc., undertaken, range from enlightenment lectures/campaigns, seminars, workshops on co-operatives, leadership training, exhibitions, etc., to functional education programmes where training in skills acquisition such as sewing, baking, batiking, soap making, tie and dye, etc., are provided in women's educational/vocational centres. They include family life education and literacy classes.

Agricultural programmes

Activities under this programme include:

(a) Assisting women farmers to obtain land, improved biological inputs, fertilizer, etc. Recently, bags of fertilizers were distributed to women farmer groups all over the country through the ELF efforts;

(b) Assisting women's groups to obtain agricultural low interest loans from the banks and agricultural loans boards;

(c) Establishment of co-operative farms and livestock projects;

(d) Training in improved food storage and processing and assisting women's co-operatives to acquire locally fabricated crop/food processing machines;

(e) Manufacturing of farm implements by women's co-operatives;

(f) Provision of infrastructures such as access road, water through liaison with the Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructures; and

(g) Research into peasant agriculture in the 1984/85 period by MIN.

Science and technology programmes

In the field of science and technology, efforts have been directed towards providing household and industrial labour-saving devices and training in improved crop production methods, storage and processing, using simple locally fabricated machines and tools.

Specifically:

(a) Through the efforts of NCWS, water pots made with clay and fixed plastic taps have been produced to assist women in water storage while providing potable water;

(b) Local scientific ways of making salt and black soap have been developed in some states;

(c) Research has been carried out on mass production of palm oil and palm kernel, and into the conversion of shea butter into cooking oil and butter; and

(d) Fabrication of simple locally made crop/food processing machines by Nigerian institutes, private companies for use by women, e.g., gari processing machines.

Cottage industries

Considering that one of the major problems of women is the lack of disposable income for themselves and their children thereby making income-generating activities of high priority to them, many of the women's organizations, particularly the BLP, have assisted in cash and/or kind in establishing a number of agro-allied and cottage industries.

These industries include:

(a) Food/crop processing industry, e.g., gari processing, oil palm processing, groundnut processing, soybean milk production, bakery, fish smoking, rice milling and gin distilling;

(b) Cultural industries, e.g., basket weaving, adire/batik production, mat making, local textile production, e.g., aso-oke, aso-oke, etc., and pottery/ceramics; and

(c) Cosmetics/fashion industry, e.g., soap making, sewing, knitting, garment production, etc.

In addition, and more importantly, market outlets are being created and/or sought for the products of these industries through local government, state and national exhibitions.

Entrepreneurship including banking and financing

Women are being encouraged to form co-operatives so that they can become credit-worthy and thereby obtain loans for undertaking their projects. Women constitute about 10 per cent of all co-operative members in Nigeria. Although precise data by gender is not available, evidence suggests that the percentage and type of co-operatives varies from state to state. For example, in Oyo State in 1982, women formed about 40 per cent of membership for credit and thrift societies, but only 10 per cent of primary societies. In Kwara State, women are about 22 per cent of co-operative farmers (Busede Iyo-pello, 1988). In Ondo State, there are over 688 co-operatives and very many more in Anambra State. All BLP committees have organized rural women into co-operatives to enhance their credit-worthiness and increase their income generating activities.

Summary of recommendations

It is pertinent to mention some specific areas of need and recommendations to redress the situation with the imbalance in the number of women vis-a-vis men involved in the nation's development:

(1) The Government should increase the number of scholarships to women, particularly women with demonstrated aptitude in the fields of science, technology and mathematics;

(2) More places should be reserved for girls in schools, particularly in those states of the federation where co-educational institutions have been abolished;

(3) The course content of adult and non-formal education programmes must be relevant to the needs of women not only to enable them to read and write but also to provide them with income-generating skills;

(4) In addition to the existing home economics extension services, the Government should establish special agricultural extension services for women. These should emphasize the new farming systems and technologies such as the use of modern farm implements, improved high yielding and disease-resistant crop varieties;

(5) Arrangements should be made to provide increased access to credit in order to enable women to participate effectively in the formal sector of the economy as professionals, business women and industrialists, the recent launching of the People's Bank notwithstanding;

(6) Although there are quite a few women in top management and lower management positions in the public and private sectors, there is still the need for increasing their numbers, especially those in line positions to implement government policies at all levels.

"Better life for rural women" project

It is now widely recognized that overall national development in Nigeria is largely dependent on improving the productivity and efficiency of the rural sector. This is because between 70 and 80 per cent of the Nigerian populace live and work in the rural areas. Hence rural development, therefore, is not only the most effective way of improving the living standards of the majority of the population, it is also a basic condition for meaningful industrialization. In Nigeria at present, the economic position depends so much on agriculture which is the main occupation of families in the rural areas.

It is for this reason that the "better life" programme was established by the Nigerian first lady, Mrs. Mariam Babangida in September 1987. The main objective of the programme is to improve the lot of the rural women who were hitherto perceived as backward, uncivilized, wretched and therefore incapable of making meaningful contributions. Secondly, it is aimed at assisting the rural women to contribute their quota to national development.

From the outcome of this programme so far the Nigerian women have demonstrated their potential, resourcefulness, unity of purpose and organizational ability and are a potent vehicle for the positive transformation of the rural areas.

Objectives of the scheme

The objectives of the "better life" programme are to stimulate and awaken the consciousness of women who live in the rural areas to the realities of today and to articulate them into active participation in the development projects for improvements of their lot and that of the nation at large.

Main activities of the programme

The major factor behind the success of this programme so far is the idea of involving the people in their own development. In all the programme activities, the people were involved from the planning stage to the implementation period. Activities were based on promoting the use of their natural resources to improve their traditional activities. Briefly, some of these activities include:

Farming

Generally, the primary activity of most rural communities is farming. The goal of farming enterprise or activity in rural areas is basically that of meeting the needs of the rural families at minimum expenditure of physical energy in such a manner as to minimize drudgery of labour. Apart from this, the programme has been able to intervene on behalf of rural women in respect of:

(i) Acquisition of farmland: through its efforts, women, as individuals or in groups, are allocated substantial portions of land for farming;

(ii) Distribution of improved high-yielding and disease-resistant crop varieties (e.g., seeds, seedlings and cuttings for maize, citrus and cassava);

(iii) Bulk purchase and distribution of fertilizers to women farmers: in 1988, several thousand tons were distributed by the "better life" programme throughout the country. In 1989, the tonnage and number of beneficiaries were further increased;

(iv) Formation of co-operatives to process and market agricultural products.

Income-generating activities

Nigerian women are known for their hard work and self-development efforts. They engage in activities such as soap making, pottery, weaving, garri processing, palm oil processing, melon shelling, sewing and so on.

Through the "better life" programme, appropriate technologies were introduced to increase their production and minimize their energy exertion. Locally fabricated equipment was developed through research work and involvement of local fabricators to minimize the cost of such equipment. In addition, the wives of the military governors in all the 21 states have assisted these women to purchase this equipment, which they re-pay as their production and profits increase.

Formation of co-operatives

In the past, rural people have relied on farming co-operatives to execute big projects. Such projects include building of houses, roads, or crop farming. This traditional way of operation was modified to the type of movement that is better organized and registered with the relevant authority for proper

functioning. This is become the most important pre-condition for effective mobilization of production resources and accelerated rural progress.

Co-operatives are a suitable organizational framework for accelerated rural development and are useful instruments for the mobilization and sensitization of women. Women all over the country embraced the idea of co-operative formation because they realized its importance in increasing their credit worthiness and placing them in a position of strength to support income generating activities out of their pooled resources.

Political education and women's involvement. The National Directorate of Social Mobilization and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), under its political education programme, has been trying to make women to be politically aware, socially conscious and politically organized into popular organizations for the defence of democratic rights and social justice.

Under the political transition programme, women have equal opportunity to actively participate in both the electoral and political process and are eligible to contest for the highest office in the land.

In conclusion, the "better life" programme has been an eye opener in the promotion of people's participation in the recovery and development of this nation.

Training of rural women in productive work skills

The VAPP/ILO/FAMRD home economics project on training of rural women in productive work skills is funded with grants from both the United Nations Development Programme and the Federal Government through the Federal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Rural Development. The project is designed to reinforce the ongoing activities of the Home Economics and Community Development Division through the establishment of a skills training unit. The executing agency of the project is the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Objectives

Established in June 1987, the Skills Training Unit trains rural women in the production of processed farm products, semi-agricultural products and craft items, using appropriate technology and resources. The goal of the training is to achieve steady and increased productivity with a view to generating rendial income for the rural women in particular, and the rural populace in general.

Activities

The Unit achieves its objectives through the following activities:

1. Identifying specific categories of groups of women who need assistance;

2. Providing feasibility studies for planned economic activities;

3. Assisting women in the formation of co-operative groups;

4. Providing credit facilities for implementing their activities;

5. Installing appropriate local technology at identified viable project sites in the zones;

6. Monitoring and testing the efficacy of low-cost technology introduced to women;

7. Providing communication support;

8. Monitoring and evaluating projects;

9. Organizing group study tours within the country to acquaint rural women's groups with ongoing projects benefiting from the Skills Training Unit;

10. Organizing group study tours to other countries to visit similar women's projects;

11. Organizing exchange visits of rural women leaders to Africa/Asia.

Training

On-the-job training in three categories of identified skills is offered by the Unit to its women's groups:

1. Food processing, preservation and storage

   (i) palm oil processing

   (ii) palm kernel oil processing

   (iii) cassava processing: fufu and gari

   (iv) fish-smoking

   (v) grain milling and dehusking (maize)

   (vi) rice processing

   (vii) cowpea and maize storage.

2. Craft production

   (i) weaving

   (ii) pottery

   (iii) tie and dye

(iv) pomade and soap making

(v) knitting and sewing

3. Administrative and management skills

(a) Training extension workers:

(i) in the preparation of feasibility studies, and

(ii) in the monitoring and evaluation of projects.

(b) Training of rural women:

(i) in the formation of co-operatives;

(ii) on how credit schemes operate; and

(iii) in basic business management skills.

Recommendations to National Government

1. As a matter of urgency, all the governments in the country, federal state and local should adopt agricultural production as the major development programme in the country.

2. Development efforts at the rural level and the attendant technological changes should be people oriented. This is to make the objectives of the development plans to be realizable as the strategies that were used in the past were alien to the people's traditional and cultural values.

3. In embarking on any rural development projects, the local people should be involved from the planning stage of such project to the end. The beneficiaries should be involved in articulating solutions to problems and in implementing the new participatory rural development. This will mean development from below and from within the people.

4. Efforts should be intensified to involve the beneficiaries of a project in the infrastructural process especially in instilling confidence in themselves either as a group or as individuals in utilizing the forces they possess in ensuring their co-operation in the execution and maintenance of the facilities.

5. Rural economic development must be focused on human welfare or the people's well-being through the provision of adequate rural infrastructure such as road, potable drinking water, shelter, markets, schools, hospitals etc. The Government, acting through its agencies, should provide these infrastructure items since they are mainly a public obligation.

6. The sponsors of rural infrastructure projects should maintain a close link between planned and actual fund allocations and other aspects that directly affect their enduring commitment over the project's duration.

7. The Government should increase budgetary allocation for all agencies that are involved in rural development and creation of employment opportunities especially in the rural areas and discourage the migration of rural people from the rural areas to the urban ones.

8. As more than 70-80 per cent of the Nigerian populace are engaged in agriculture directly or indirectly, government should further support agriculture through increasing its support for existing agricultural institutions in order to enhance people's income and encourage them to participate actively in the recovery and development process.

9. The Government should actively support all programmes that seek to enhance the status of women especially in the areas of income-generating activities by actively mobilizing them into groups or co-operatives and promoting their products through opening of outlets for marketing.

10. The Government should make the process of forming the rural people into co-operatives and of obtaining credit facilities easier by putting in place necessary legislation for the realization of same.

11. As most of the people, especially the rural people, have been marginalized by the implementation of the structural adjustment programme (SAP), the Government should strengthen existing credit facilities established for the small- and medium-scale industries and enact or amend existing legislation for commercial banks to extend a percentage of their loan scheme to the development of small-scale industries located in the areas in order to allow more of the people to participate in the recovery and development process.

Recommendations to the United Nations

1. The United Nations should direct its financial agencies, that is the IMF, the World Bank, etc., to increase its allocation for rural development projects especially those that have a multiplier effect on the lives of the rural people. In this regard, more funds should be made available to people oriented projects and programmes such as the National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND), the "Better life for rural women" programme and the People's Bank of Nigeria.

2. The United Nations should direct its agencies especially those that are involved in rural development to allocate more of their resources, financial and material for the building of adequate and relevant rural infrastructures.

Conclusion

It is only pertinent to say here, perhaps for the sake of emphasis, that programmes designed for people's participation in recovery and development should not only focus on the development of the people, but should involve them from the planning to the execution and implementation phases. Such programmes have to put the people's social and cultural variations into consideration and be people oriented rather than based on mere economic growth indicators. In addition, the development process should start with what the people know how to do best. In this way, the government should provide the necessary infrastructural and support facilities to enable the majority of the people to participate in the recovery and development of their country.

Table 1: Share of agriculture in gross domestic product - 1985

Year	All sectors (N million)	Agricultural sector (N million)	Percentage share of agriculture
1965	2,594.4	1,476.4	56.92
1966	3,119.9	1,691.6	54.49
1967	3,374.8	1,855.0	54.97
1968	2,751.6	1,415.2	55.50
1969	3,656.2	1,915.2	52.38
1970	4,519.3	1,711.3	48.23
1971	5,261.1	2,570.3	48.47
1972	6,650.9	3,033.3	45.60
1973	7,187.5	3,095.1	43.03
1974	12,116.9	3,345.1	27.66
1975	15,462.8	3,944.0	25.95
1976	19,437.7	4,579.5	23.56
1977	23,876.0	7,295.3	30.56
1978	26,258.5	5,143.4	19.59
1979	27,370.2	5,389.1	19.69
1980	31,434.7	5,656.8	18.00
1981	46,915.4	9,863.1	21.42
1982	40,370.4	10,419.3	25.11
1983	45,772.0	12,158.0	26.01
1984	25,855.0	6,651.0	25.90
1985	26,159.0	6,348.0	24.10

Source: CBN, Annual Report and Statement of Accounts (various issues).

Table 2: Share of food in total import value: 1971-1985

Year	Total import (N million)	Food import (N million)	Percentage share of food
1971	1,069.1	88.3	8.2
1972	990.8	95.8	9.7
1973	1,241.1	128.0	10.3
1974	1,717.3	154.8	9.0
1975	3,7 1.5	297.9	8.0
1976	5,148.5	440.9	8.6
1977	7,693.7	1.4	10.4
1978	8,217.1	1,070.7	13.1
1979	6,169.2	952.4	15.4
1980	6,217.1	1,049.0	16.8
1981	12,692.5	1,7 0.2	14.1
1982	10,100.2	1,642.2	16.3
1983	8,107.5	1,176.7	13.3
1984	7,178.3	1,052.1	14.7
1985	7,932.9	685.1	8.6

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria, Economic and Financial Review (various issues).

Table 3: Share of agriculture in total export of major commodities 1965-1985

Year	Total export (₦ million)	Agricultural export (₦ million)	Share of agriculture as % of total
1965	536.6	327.4	61.01
1966	568.2	292.6	51.50
1967	540.0	264.6	49.00
1968	467.0	269.7	57.75
1969	683.0	278.3	40.73
1970	885.0	386.8	43.38
1971	1,280.8	265.5	20.73
1972	1,404.7	190.2	13.54
1973	2,278.4	288.7	12.67
1974	5,791.8	307.7	5.31
1975	4,922.5	256.5	5.21
1976	6,751.7	261.5	3.87
1977	7,636.7	437.7	5.73
1978	6,064.4	444.2	7.32
1979	10,836.8	198.5	1.66
1980	12,687.4	434.5	3.40
1981	11,011.1	281.9	2.60
1982	9,196.9	203.4	2.20
1983	7,502.5	259.0	3.40
1984*	9,088.0	206.6	2.30
1985*	11,214.8	258.8	2.10

*Provisional

Source: CBN, Annual Report and Statement of Accounts (various issues).

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